



Dear Parents/Carers

Happy New Year! I hope that you have had an enjoyable Christmas break and that you and your families are keeping well.

I'm aware of a number of students that have experienced Covid-19 during the holidays. If you haven't notified us of this, please do so via attendance@lvc.org so that we can update our records accordingly.

The government issued **new** guidance for schools yesterday. This includes:

- **the reintroduction of face coverings being worn by secondary school students in classrooms as well as communal areas;**
- **all students and staff engaging with Lateral Flow Testing (including those that have had Covid-19 in the last 90 days);**
- **a potential reduction in the self-isolation period from 10 to 7 days for positive cases;**
- **daily Lateral Flow Testing for identified close contacts for 7 days.**

The new guidance is explained below and comes into effect this week. I have also included some reminders about start of term arrangements and existing expectations. Thank you for your support with implementing these measures to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission in our school community.

It is likely going to continue to prove challenging to staff the school this term. We had up to 20% of our teachers absent in December due to Covid-19 and other health-related reasons. We will endeavour to cover staff absence to keep school open and running as normal. However, it may be necessary to combine classes and/or resort to remote learning for some year groups given the difficulty in securing supply teachers. We will keep you updated with any further changes.

In the meantime, please ensure that you log your child's Lateral Flow Test result before they return to school this week and make sure that they have a face mask to wear at school and on the bus. If you require additional LFT kits, they will be available for collection from Reception from Tuesday.

Thanks again for your understanding and co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Helena
Helena Marsh
Principal
Linton Village College

Linton Village College Cambridge Road, Linton, Cambridge, CB21 4JB

Tel: 01223 891233 | Email: lintonvc@lvc.org | Web: www.lvc.org

Principal: Helena Marsh MEd



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Staggered return

Year groups will return in a staggered way this week to allow all students to have a Lateral Flow Test onsite. Remote learning tasks will be set on Satchel: One for year groups that remain at home.

Tuesday 4th January: Years 7 and 8 return to school and are tested onsite (*Years 9, 10 and 11 - remote learning*).

Wednesday 5th January: Years 10 and 11 return to school and are tested onsite (*Year 9 – remote learning*).

Thursday 6th January: Year 9 return to school and are tested onsite.

Testing

- To help boost testing participation and reduce transmission after a period of social mixing during the holidays, all students are offered an on-site Lateral Flow Test.
- Individual testing slots have been allocated to students on their first day back to school. Students will conduct the test themselves under supervision by a member of the testing team in the Sports Centre. Students and their parents will be notified of any positive results. Any students that receive a positive result will need to be collected from school and book a PCR test while isolating.
- Parental consent is required for students to engage with Lateral Flow Testing. Unless symptomatic or returning a positive test result, students should attend College as above, regardless of whether they are taking part in the testing programme.
- Students continue to be strongly encouraged to test twice weekly at home (Sunday and Wednesday). This includes anyone that has tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 90 days, after their isolation period.
- Twice-weekly test results should be reported to the College (using the ALIS email link) and to [NHS Test and Trace](#).

Self-isolation

- Anyone experiencing Covid-19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new, persistent cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste) must self-isolate and arrange a PCR test.
- The ten-day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result has been reduced to seven days if they test negative on day 6 and 7 or their isolation period. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 and tests must be taken 24 hours apart. If both these test results are negative, and the student does not have a high temperature, they may end their self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to College from day 8. Those who cannot test must self-isolate for 10 days.

Close contacts

- Close contacts are not required to self-isolate if they are fully vaccinated (14 days has passed since their final vaccination dose) or under the age of 18 years and 6 months.
- Students that are identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, should take a Lateral Flow Test every day for seven days (or 10 days since the last contact with the confirmed case if this is earlier) and continue to attend College as normal unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time. This includes siblings over the age of 5 years.
- The College is not responsible for identifying and notifying close contacts but will provide parents with regular updates and advise on the need for PCR testing in the event of an outbreak (10% of a class/group).

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Vaccinations for all 16-year olds and eligible 12-15-year olds

- If your child missed their Covid-19 vaccination in school as they were not yet 12 years old, they were absent from school or had recently had Covid-19, you can [book them a vaccination online](#). Children can get a 1st dose of the vaccine from the day they turn 12. If your child has tested positive for Covid-19 and is not at high risk from Covid-19, they will need to wait 12 weeks before they can have a Covid-19 vaccine.
- In response to the Omicron variant, the JCVI advised that a Pfizer booster vaccine should be offered to all young people aged 16 or 17 and to children aged 12 to 15 years old who are in a clinical risk group or who are a household contact of immunosuppressed individuals, and those who are severely immunosuppressed and have had a third primary dose. The NHS will communicate home how eligible children and young people can get their boosters shortly.

Face coverings

- Unless medically exempt, students will be expected to wear face masks in classrooms and all indoor spaces when they return to College this week. They will need to ensure they are on before entering buildings. This national advice will remain in place until Wednesday 26th January at which point it will be reviewed. Face coverings continue to be mandatory on school transport.
- All students are advised to bring a spare face covering. We have a limited supply of disposable face masks to provide spares to those in need.
- Regular washing of reusable face masks is encouraged.
- The guidance does not require staff to wear face masks in classrooms. However, we will encourage staff to wear masks in the classroom if they wish, especially if they are not able to maintain a distance from students and other adults. Staff will take all practicable steps to ensure communication issues in the classroom are mitigated; teachers and LSAs are encouraged to wear clear face coverings to support hearing impaired students.

Other existing risk management measures

We will continue with all other existing measures as follows. Your support with encouraging good hygiene measures is much appreciated.

- CO2 monitors will be used in all classrooms to aid ventilation control.
- Rooms will be ventilated with a regular throughput of air.
- Hand sanitisers will be available in classrooms and communal areas.
- Routine and regular hand washing is encouraged.
- 'Catch it, kill it, bin it' encouraged for respiratory hygiene.
- On-site visitors will be restricted.
- Assemblies, planned events and meetings will be on-line or postponed as required.
- Enhanced, touch-point cleaning will remain in place.

Examinations

We haven't had any indication in changes to the summer examination series. External January exams will go ahead as planned.

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Uniform expectations

- Students will be able to wear additional layers to stay warm if necessary in cold spaces. A coat can be worn on top of their regular uniform if required. Alternative clothing items should not be worn in place of a school jumper or blazer. Hoodies are not permitted instead of a school jumper and are not permitted in place of coats.
- Changing rooms will continue to be used to enable students to change for PE lessons. CO2 monitors are used to monitor ventilation levels in changing rooms.

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